THE
RECONSTRUCTIONIST

DEDICATED TO THE ADVANCEMENT OF JUDAISM AS A RELIGIOUS CIVILIZATION, TO THE UPBUILDING OF ISRAEL'S ANCIENT HOMELAND, AND TO THE FURTHERANCE OF UNIVERSAL FREEDOM, JUSTICE AND PEACE.

Vol. IV. December 16, 1938 Kislev 23, 5699 No. 16

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EDITORIALS

The Forgotten Essential

GRATEFUL as Jews are to Great Britain for its outspoken sympathy with German Jewry, for its efforts to find for victims of persecution some place of refuge in its colonial possessions, they are more than a little bewildered over the strange reticence and reluctance displayed by His Majesty's government with regard to Palestine. It is all much like that letter writer described by Sholom Aleichem who, after penning long rambling epistles, invariably appended a two-line postscript beginning with the phrase: *ikkar shokhahti*—"I forgot the main point."

And Palestine is inevitably the main point in any program of Jewish migration. We are not unmindful of the fact that we must avail ourselves of every haven during the storm—whether it be Tanganyika, British Guinea or the South Sea Islands. The volume of Jewish need is so large that not all the vessels available can contain it. But, for a number of considerations, Palestine must be central in any plan for the movement of German Jewish refugees.

First: Eretz Israel is the only land to which Jews have a legal claim that exceeds tolerance and the caprice of goodwill—a claim validated by international agreement.

Second: It is the one land into which Jewish immigration on a mass scale is possible at once, the only territory where no lengthy, expensive preliminary preparations for settlement are required.

Third: Palestine has demonstrated its practicability as a scene of Jewish settlement. Over four hundred thousand Jews have successfully made it their home. It is a place where we are certain Jews can live healthily and happily. Such assertions cannot be made concerning any of the alternative lands suggested.

Fourth: Palestine has proved its ability to absorb German Jews. More refugees in the past five years have turned to it than to the entire rest of the world. It stands prepared now to accept up to 100,000 immigrants in the course of the next year.

Fifth: Palestine is the only land where the future cultural life of German Jewish emigres is automatically assured. What may happen Jewishly to those who may go to Tanganyika, no one can say. In Palestine they will be Jews, living a group life abundantly meaningful to themselves and contributing to the renaissance of Judaism throughout world Jewry. Man for man, a Jewish settler in Palestine is more significant than one elsewhere.

In the light of these considerations, the evasions of the British government with regard to Palestine are, to say the least, paradoxical. And there are not wanting those who suspect that Great Britain's generosity

is motivated by reasons less worthy and less altruistic than pure sympathy. This is neither the time nor place for invidious analyses of English policy. But the realities being what they are, THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST calls on Jews to consider seriously all the territories suggested for Jewish settlement, but not to lose sight of Palestine in the process. It urges its readers to give their support to all Zionist bodies and funds which will serve to recall to Great Britain's attention both its long established obligations and the most obvious means of relieving Jewish distress.

Territorialism And The Present Crisis

TERRITORIALISM, to the misfortune of the Jewish people today, has remained throughout the history of Jewry only a collection of platform utterances, dreams, plans and ideologies. Herzl and Nordau were, properly speaking, territorialists. The left wings in Zionism were predominantly territorialists, and the struggle within their ranks for the acceptance of Palestine as the "territorial center" for the Jewish proletariat was a difficult and lengthy one.

Today, when the problem of the Jewish homeless and wanderers has become most acute and when additional places for territorial settlement are of the utmost necessity, the realization of territorialism is still very problematical. There are many interpretations for this continuous "Messianic" status of an idea, the desirability of the realization of which is denied by few. Territorialism was always composed of two wings, the ideological and the practical. The ideological wing was given to dreaming, planning, preaching, theorizing on the needs of the Jewish masses, but rarely to practical experiments. This wing also lacked what Palestine had—a group of pioneers to start the real work. It naturally could never compete with Zionism in its appeal to the emotions of the Jewish masses. Nothing could drive out of the psyche of the Jewish masses the idea of Palestine as its religious and national home.

The difficulty with the philanthropic territorialists has been precisely their philanthropic view of Jewish life. Their outlook was easily satisfied with a patchwork solution: a purchase of land here and there, a commission sent hither and thither, an occasional option. What is worse, it became a field for any adventurer, with honest or fake fantasies, an opportunity for any cheap politician to get his name in the newspapers, and might easily afford a chance for financial racketeers in Jewish life to feather their little nests.

Today, matters are at a crucial point. The Diaspora is branching out. German Jews in their eagerness to escape from Dachau, will go anywhere in the tropics or near the very North Pole. The Munich Pact has sharpened these issues. It seems that Hitler will teach other countries which have been anxious for years to get rid of the Jews that the only way of achieving this aim is to maltreat the Jews so that they will have to get out. Hence, any Jewish leaders or organizations who think that the problem of refugees today is merely that of German-Jewish refugees are unfortunately wrong. Furthermore, those who think that, if the problem of German refugees is solved, all will be well, are wrong again. This is merely the beginning of a forced and, let us hope, possible mass migration of the Jewish people from several of their centers of population in Eastern Europe.

It is unfortunate that the problem of an additional territory should be at the present time tied up directly with the problem of the closed door of Palestine. This circumstance may, in many cases, confuse the issue. Let us, at least, attempt to clarify it for ourselves.

A projected territorial center has to be large enough for real mass settlement of at last one-half million people who can live in a concentrated Jewish community and enjoy a certain degree of autonomy both political and cultural. The efforts in-

volved in puny settlements of 20,000 to 50,000 are not worthwhile from the financial and pioneering point of view, nor from the point of view of permanence.

An additional factor to be considered is the cultural content of large mass settlements, particularly of settlement of German Jews. The mass settlement of Jews from Germany, without their proper organization and cultural transformation, will merely establish another outpost of German culture. It will provide a market for German goods and German books. It will not be of any positive benefit to the Jewish community, with the exception of affording a humanitarian method of getting rid of a number of needy refugees.

Nor is there any sense in creating in South America an English-speaking center of Jews who are merely servants of British imperial interests such as might be established by accepting the possible offer of a larger territory in Guiana. If territorialism is to succeed on British soil, in addition to a large territory and good will on the part of the British Empire, it needs also a certain cultural content. This cultural content cannot be based on the German culture which these refugees will bring with them from their former homeland. We certainly cannot revert to a Yiddishist secular culture with the danger that it produce a Yevsektsia.

For its cultural content, this new territory, if it is to be realized, will have to draw upon Palestine. The Hebrew language and the Jewish religion will have to provide the main aspects of the customs, habits and folklore of this new settlement. Palestine can provide even more. There is no reason why pioneers from Palestine who are experienced in colonization should not volunteer several years of their lives in preparing the road and laying the basis of a large Jewish immigration in these new countries.

There is no doubt that the cooperation of Palestine Jewry will be easily and enthusiastically obtained if a real territory is to be provided and if it is not to compete with the Holy Land as the national home of the Jewish people. With the present increase of "potential refugees," there is need for both Palestine and any additional territory. Palestine can serve as the major country for the immediate absorption of immigrants and as the best place for training of pioneers for the new settlements in other countries. The contention of Zionists that Chamberlain's offers are mere smokescreens for his unreasonable refusal to take Palestine into serious consideration is to say the least, plausible, and must be reckoned with.

Jewish leaders are cautioned not to accept any poor substitutes for Palestine. No substitute is satisfactory. A bargain of this type is bound to be a poor bargain. Nobody objects to the absorption of smaller numbers of refugees on decent human terms in any country of the world. But mass settlement, colonization and pioneering are not just migrations of individuals. They have to be viewed as efforts to provide permanent solutions for the ills of the Jewish people. As such, philanthropy is not sufficient. National, cultural and religious factors are just as important as the problem of economics, humanitarianism and diplomacy.

A Discordant Voice That Should Be Silenced

IN one of the editorials of our last issue, we called attention to the mighty and harmonious chorus of the churches of all denominations in America in voicing sympathy with the victims of Nazi persecution, and denunciation of the persecutors. We are forced, however, to take note of a single discordant voice that has insisted on disturbing this harmony—the voice of Father Coughlin. By subtle innuendo and falsification of evidence, he has sought to arouse Jew-hatred in America, insinuating that the Jew is persecuted, not because he is a Jew, but because Jews have played a leading part in the Communist movement.

There can be but one purpose in making such a statement, the purpose of creating hostility to the Jewish people. For even if the charge were true, it would be

irrelevant, for the persecution does not discriminate between communists and non-communists. In America, where, in many states the Communist party is recognized as a legitimate political party, there is no reason why Jews should not have a right to join that party if they are convinced that its program is in the interest of the country as a whole. Whether few Jews or many are communists, whether many communists or few are Jews cannot, in the slightest degree, condone measures against Jews as such which make no distinction between communists and non-communists. If all Jews may be persecuted by capitalists because some Jews are communists and all Jews may be persecuted by communists because some Jews are capitalists, it simply means that, whatever and wherever Jews are, they may always be persecuted. That is, apparently, Father Coughlin's objective.

But when Father Coughlin asserts that the Jews have played a leading role in communism, he is asserting a lie. Documentary evidence of its falsehood have been frequently enough advanced to make it plain that his reiteration of the libel is intentional and malicious. His statements can be refuted easily enough, but, for purposes of propagandist appeal to ignorant and prejudiced opinion, a lie is as effective as truth and proof against all contradictory evidence.

What makes Father Coughlin's statements especially deplorable is the fact that they are the utterances of a priest who belongs to a church that exercises, in doctrinal matters, a strict scrutiny over the public utterances of its clergy and applies disciplinary measures where opinions contrary to its authoritative doctrine are expressed. To be sure, it is only in matters of doctrine that the Catholic priest is responsible to his church for what he says. It would be a grave injustice to hold the Catholic Church responsible for Father Coughlin's mendacious statements. But we fear that people in general cannot make nice distinctions between doctrinal and other issues and that the effect of his remarks will necessarily be not only to disparage the Jews but also to discredit his own church.

Can nothing be done by the Church to dissociate itself in some official way that all can recognize and understand from the malicious propaganda that Father Coughlan has been conducting? We know that he does not speak the authentic voice of the Church; yet the mere fact that he is a priest of that church gives to his utterances a prestige and authority that they would not otherwise enjoy. Surely, there must be some way by which a church as well-disciplined and organized as the Catholic Church can bring the weight of its moral censure to bear on one who utilizes the prestige of his priesthood to spread malicious libels. We do not presume to suggest just what should be done, but we do feel that religious Catholics, in justice to their own church, as well as in justice to the Jews and to the cause of the domestic tranquillity of America, ought to do something to silence Father Coughlin or to repudiate him explictly.

Editorial Correction

THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST wishes to correct the impression which might have been left in the minds of its readers by a statement in the editorial entitled "Paging the General Council for Jewish Rights" in the issue of December 2, 1938. Misunderstanding the overwhelmingly preponderant sentiment of the Editorial Board, the editor assigned to the writing of that editorial suggested the possibility of unified action with the Jewish People's Committee—a recommendation incompatible with the majority opinion of the editors. For the sake of clarity, THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST restates its approval of the idea of the General Jewish Council and its desire to see the authority of the Council recognized.

For this very reason, however, we wish

to reiterate the thought which was in the minds of all members of the Editorial Board when the editorial was assigned. We feel that the present situation is one that calls for a comprehensive statesman-like plan of action which will utilize whatever resources of means and man-power the Jews of America can command. No such plan has as yet come from the Council and we fear that, unless it be forthcoming in the near future, the Council will lose its moral prestige and opportunity for leadership, and American Jewry will remain a shepherdless flock.

Hebrew Literature in America

By Robert Gordis

LIFE seems constantly engaged in a conspiracy to defeat logic. This is well illustrated by the status of modern Hebrew literature in America. It is beyond dispute that the Hebraists in America are so few in number as not even to qualify as a sizeable minority among the four million Jews in our country. They have little prestige and influence on their side, for they practically all belong to the lower economic levels of American Jewry, and, with one outstanding exception, have no Maecenas in their midst. They receive little encouragement from Jewish institutions of higher learning and none from American universities. Their academic world is composed essentially of the various Teachers' Institutes and Colleges of Jewish Studies in our larger cities. By all the rules of logic, the Hebraists should have been an inarticulate and uncreative group, lost in the preponderant English-speaking majority.

Actually, however, this handful of enthusiasts, by dint of heroic obstinacy, are making significant contributions to Jewish life and thought. For seventeen years, they have succeeded in publishing an outstanding weekly, *Hadoar,* which has no near rival in quality among all our Anglo-Jewish weeklies. In fact, it eminently deserves inclusion, together with the Yiddish monthly, *Die Zukunft,* among the four or five worthwhile Jewish periodicals published in the United States. These apparently are more than sufficient for the intellectual needs of four and a half million Jews, and they are therefore permitted, one and all, to engage in a perpetual duel with the Angel of Death.

Moreover, the Hebraists of America are working manfully to create a youth movement, which publishes a very promising youth journal, *Nib,* besides conducting other cultural ventures in music, theatre and the dance. Already talents of no mean order have appeared among the Hebrew youth, most of whom have received their training in American institutions.

The *Histadrut Ivrit* has also managed to publish several valuable volumes of poetry, criticism and essays, two of which have seen the light during the past few months. The first of these is the "American Hebrew Year Book, 5698," a handsomely issued miscellany of over four hundred pages with material from thirty-six contributors.*

Undoubtedly, American Jewry possesses an immeasurably greater number of writers, scholars and thinkers whose medium is English. Yet it is symptomatic of the status of Jewish culture and the divisive character of Jewish life today, that nothing comparable does appear in English, while the Hebraists have issued two predecessors to this Annual. The volume contains, as is natural, material of uneven value, but, in its breadth of view and variety of subject, it is an index of what

* "*Sefer Hashanah Liyehude Amerika,* 5698," edited by Menahem Ribalow, New York, 1938.

a vital Jewish culture should include.

The first section is entitled "Scholarship and Science." It opens with a thoughtful critique of the nationalist emphasis in Judaism from the Reformist standpoint by Prof. Cohon of Hebrew Union College. Dr. Touroff is attracted by the perennially fascinating but elusive theme of national psychology. On the basis of previous studies in the field by Levy-Bruhl, Dewey, Judd and Wundt, as well as specific Jewish studies by Elias Hurwicz, Kautsky, Buber and Melamed, he concludes that the basic Jewish trait is extremism, the inability to make compromises with reality, or to accept the "Golden Mean" as a principle of action, Maimonides to the contrary notwithstanding. From this trait emerges the Jewish insistence upon absolute justice, the search for unity in every field of thought, and the existence of extreme positions and inner conflicts in the soul of modern Jews. Dr. Meyer Waxman contributes a very interesting and detailed study of Isaac Abrabanel, with particular emphasis upon his methods of Biblical exegesis and Jewish philoosphy, and Prof. A. Z. Idelsohn a valuable study of measured rhythm in Jewish poetry and music. He points out that the Biblical verse-forms, such as parallelism and stichoid structure, continued to be utilized in the Liturgy until the dawn of the Arabic school of *payetanim*.

The section of belle lettres, like all modern Hebrew literature is weak in fiction and rich in poetry. Lisitzky's opening poem has an American locale, dealing with an outstanding member of an American synagogue, but it is largely concerned with nostalgia for his European boyhood home. Isaac Silberschlag contributed eight poems based on negro themes, several of which possess both vigor and humor, qualities all too rare in current Hebrew poetry. Particularly successful is the ironic "Brotherhood" and the powerful "Lament." "Black Skin" on the other hand, has undeniable vitality, but suffers from a weak ending, based on a play on words. S. L. Blank contributes a short story in the modern manner. In Hillel Bavli's group of three poems, the last is a particularly poignant picture of the stirrings of youthful revolt after youth is gone.

The section on criticism contains a detailed study of Hebrew poets in America by Menahem Ribalow, marked by his usual fineness of perception and trenchant style. There also appear essays on such varied themes as poetry, the influence of the Bible on English literature, Eugene O'Neill, Berdichewsky, and the original Hebrew grammatical theories of Phineas Mordell, who died four years ago in Philadelphia. Briefer notices appear on Professor R. J. H. Gottheil, P. Lachower, the historian of modern Hebrew literature, and Rabbi Akiba Eger, who died a century ago.

The final section of the Annual bears the American stamp, being concerned with "The Household of Israel in America." Papers appear on organized Jewish philanthropy, Jews and the New Deal, Yiddish literature, and American-Jewish homiletic productions. Easily the most valuable contribution to this section, and one of the most significant in the entire volume is Dr. Uriah Z. Engelman's study of "The American-Jewish Family." Dr. Engelman has already achieved a reputation as a scientifically trained, unbiased and independent social statistician and this study of Jewish population trends is a valuable contribution to a neglected field. On the basis of a study of Jewish families which he carried through in Buffalo, N. Y., he discovers that the average number of children per Jewish family is 2.49 and the median 2.23, lower than that of any other racial or religious group. Moreover, a comparison with figures available for 1890, shows a drop of 48% from 4.66 children per Jewish family to 2.49. Since an average of 2.6 children per family is essential, according to Dublin, to replace the parents, it is obvious that the American-Jewish community faces the prospect of an alarming decrease in the near

future, now that immigration is at a virtual standstill. All the factors making for a lower birth rate, such as urbanization, higher standards of living, occupational distribution and higher educational levels, operate with extraordinary power in the Jewish group. The solution is by no means easy to indicate, but the recognition of the problem is the first step in that direction, for which Dr. Engelman has supplied a firm statistical basis.

The volume also contains a directory of Jewish institutions, unfortunately incomplete, and, in honor of the Sesqui-centennial of the adoption of the Constitution, a Hebrew version of that document. As a whole, the Annual is a significant contribution to Hebrew letters and Jewish culture in America.

Shortly after its appearance, another interesting volume appeared entitled "An Anthology of Hebrew Poetry in America"* with the assistance of Dr. Solomon Goldman and the Israel Matz Foundation. Here, Mr. Ribalow reprints his essay on the Hebrew poets of America, followed by selections from twenty-four poets whose creative activity took place wholly or in part on these shores. Each poet's portrait also appears, with a brief biographical sketch. The editor has striven to emphasize the American note by including rhapsodies to American Freedom by Maskilic immigrants half a century ago, like Sobel and Garson, as well as Rosenzweig's satiric onslaughts on Jewish ignorance. The sentiments of these poems are unimpeachable, but their poetic value questionable. Dolitzki and Imber represent the middle period, the third stage being largely contemporary, with most of its members, except Silkiner, fortunately among the living.

The question posed by this anthology is: In what sense is this American Hebrew poetry? Only one member of the group, Reuben Grossman, was born in the United States, and he now resides in Palestine, though it is true that several others have received their education here, in whole or in part. Some have dealt with American themes in long poems of almost epic dimensions. Curiously enough, however, both Efros in "Silent Wigwams" and Lisitzki in his "Dying Flames," have preferred to treat the life of the Indians, a period as remote from the current American scene as medieval Europe.

Obviously, poetry, far more than scholarship or criticism, must be integral to the life of a country, and these gifted poets, working in a foreign medium, and with roots in another continent, have not yet developed that sense of identification with the American environment. For that we must look to native American-Jewish youth, who are being trained in Jewish institutions of learning and feel at home in America as well as in Israel.

Nevertheless, the Anthology, like the Annual, testifies to the existence of a creative Hebrew culture in America. In these days of world-wide destruction for our people, these volumes are a symbol of indomitable hope.

* *"Antologia shel Hashirah Haivrit Ba america,"* edited by Menahem Ribalow, New York, 1938.

Lights of Dedication, A Hanukkah Fable.

By Eugene Kohn

"Let there be darkness!" said the tyrant, for
He could not bear that men should clearly see
His face of hideous malice nor behold
The villainous deeds he daily ordered done.
So, one by one, he caused to be extinguished
The lamps that blazed within the holy courts
Where men adored in awe the Lord of Light.
He then polluted all the nation's oil
By mixing it with an infernal fluid
So that the lamps, when lit by sparks of hate,
Gave forth a hellish flare that was not light
But "darkness visible." This done, he led
A noisy throng of riotous followers,
Misshapen beings that had once been men,
To where the Temple rose in majesty.
Their torches of darkness, though they gave no light,
Cast monstrous shadows that filled earth and air
With nameless horrors, such as harrassed souls
Behold in dreams, then waken with a scream
To toss in a cold sweat the long night through.
The Temple courts were solitary, for
The priests of light had fled to hide themselves
Among the cliffs and caverns of the rocks.
Up to the Holy of Holies trod the tyrant,
Void now and dark, abandoned by the Presence,
Who now preferred to make His blessed abode
Among the caves where thronged His faithful ones,
To dissipate their gloom with rays of hope.
The tyrant peered into the darkness. Then,
Seeing the place forsaken of the Light,
Set there his throne and thus addressed his host:
"I am the Lord; my darkness is the light;
My anarchy is law; obey or die!"
Then that vile multitude of demons, drunk
With innocent blood that yet quenched not their thirst,
Against the light upraised saluting hands
And shouted: "Hail our leader! Hail our lord!
The god made manifest, Epiphanes!"

But hark! what is this sound that now is heard
Above the swelling tumult of the crowd?
A peal of derisive laughter, loud and long.
It echoes from the hills and rolls like thunder
Along the plane. For lo! the Lord of Light,
Has turned all-seeing eyes upon the scene.
No devilish darkness of the nether world
Hides aught from Him. Even in the sheltering gloom,

The tyrant shuddered when those searching eyes
Invisible dwelt upon his wretched form.
The echoes of celestial laughter ceased.
Deep silence followed; then a still, small voice:
"Blaspheming fool, this is your day of triumph,
Enjoy it, if you can, but not for long.
Against you, I will send an adversary,
My Maccabee, my Hammerer, beware!
He serves the Light; his power will prevail."
Again the silence fell. Long time, in awe,
The throng stood waiting for it knew not what,
Some answer to the portent of the voice.
No answer came. At last, the sullen tyrant,
To show he was not cowed, called for mad revels,
And the crowd obeyed.

Day followed day, and still no token came
Of the divine displeasure, save that men
Began to whisper that there had been heard—
They would not say that they themselves had heard it,
For fear their words might reach the tyrant's ears
And rouse his wrath—a faint tap-tap, tap-tap,
A hammering but barely audible,
As in a forest one may sometimes hear
A distant woodpecker's tap-tap, tap-tap.
The tyrant heard it and his heart was filled
With vague foreboding of impending doom.
Yet dared he not admit his haunting fear,
Nor would his subjects show they heeded aught,
Until it was observed that, from the wall,
A stone had fallen. Straightway orders went
To masons to repair the sudden breach,
But ere they had replaced the fallen stone,
Two more stones toppled from the battlement,
And louder now the hammering was heard.
With frantic haste, all men were summoned now
To work upon the building of the wall,
But all in vain; they could not overtake
The ruin wrought by the incessant tapping
Of unseen hammers driven by unseen hands.

Yet would the tyrant not admit defeat.
Furious, he ordered all his armed host
To follow to their mountain fastnesses
The fugitive priests and all the pious folk
That there had gathered loyal to the Light.
But, when the tyrant's army reached the hills,
Behold! the hunted band had turned at bay.
Not white-robed priests and bent-backed peasants now
Confronted them, but armored men of war,
Whose swords and spears flashed with a light divine,
And, at their head, a lion of a man.

Beside him stood his banner-bearer flaunting
A flag on which two symbols were displayed,
A flaming lamp and, by its side, a hammer.
Then, ere the tyrant's officers could plan
How to attack the unexpected foe,
The warrior priests gave forth a mighty shout:
"Who is like Thee among the gods, O Lord,
And, among men, who is like Maccabee,
The Hammerer!" Thus shouting, they attacked,
And, like a quarryman whose hammer falls
Upon a mighty boulder, crushing it
And scattering flying fragments all about,
So that brave charge led by the Hammerer,
Shattered to fragments all the proud array
Marshalled against him. To the palace gates
Marched the victorious army. Night had fallen,
But, fearlessly defiant of the tyrant,
They carried holy torches burning bright.

Much marveled they at sight of the ruined walls
And the defenseless city that lay before them.
No guard stood watch before the palace gate.
Its portals, locked from within, yet yielded lightly
To pressure of their hands. Halting his men,
Before the hall in which the king was wont
To hold his court in pomp and majesty,
The Maccabee took in his hand a torch
And entered it alone. There sat the tyrant
In solitary state, but at that moment,
When, on his ugly and misshapen person,
Fell the revealing glare of the torch's light,
As smitten by a might unseen hammer,
The throne collapsed, and, midst its ruins, lay
A writhing, frothing ruin of a man,
The stamp of madness writ on all his features.
" 'Epiphanes' they hailed thee, 'manifest god,' "
The conqueror said, "But henceforth, men shall know
Thou art Epimanes, the madman." Then,
Turning his back upon his prostrate foe,
The Hammerer rejoined his waiting host.
Now to the Temple they direct their steps.
Within its sacred courts, they light again,
In reverent worship, all the holy flames:
The flame of love that burns upon the hearth,
The flame of faith that burns upon the altar,
The flame of truth that burns before the Ark,
All, all the sacred flames again they kindle.
Then sang the Maccabee before the Lord,
And all that mighty host joined in the singing:

"Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us
Be glory given, but to Thee alone.
We fought as best we could, with sword and spear.

Forgive us, for we knew no other way.
No better are we than ferocious beasts,
Save for the light Thy grace on us bestows.
To Thee, O God, be glory for the light,
Before which ravenous wolves and wretched tyrants
Cower and cringe. Oh, bless us on this day,
And hallow Thou our lights of dedication!
Bless them so that their splendor may increase
From generation unto generation.
For ever and for ever, halleluyah!"

"School For Barbarians"

By MORTIMER J. COHEN

MANY will recall their youthful feelings after a visit to the old Eden Musee in New York, where, in its horror-section, they saw frightful distortions of men and women, repelling freaks of humanity, and the principals of contemporaneous scandals and murders, done in wax. They will recall, too, the relief they experienced when they returned to the world of normality. Something of the same feeling comes over the reader of Erika Mann's "School For Barbarians"* in which Nazi Germany takes on the form of a modern Museum of Horrors.

Erika Mann is the talented daughter of the famous writer and thinker, Thomas Mann. Both now live in the United States, refugees from Germany. In his penetrating introduction to his daughter's book, Mann writes that, while it is a repellent subject, "It tells, out of a fulness of knowledge, of education in Nazi Germany and of what National Socialism understands by this word. Yet strangely enough, the book is the opposite of repellent."

Erika Mann writes with remarkable lucidity, and with just that touch of gentle irony and scorn that spices the brutal facts and incidents she recounts. A perusal of this book will enable one to understand how cruelly thorough has been the spiritual revolution within Germany. She vividly reveals the tragedy of the Jews, as well as the involuntary service they render in the Nazi scheme. For the author, there is the unconquerable hope that deep within human nature rebellion will arise—negative and positive signs already appear—and blow away the whole hideous, miasmatic nightmare.

The Nazis, with fiendish ingenuity, have dedicated the entire machinery of education to the exaltation of the State and the Aryan race, and to the glorification of War. Their ultimate goal is the conquest of Europe, and, in time, the world. *"Wehrwissenschaft"*—the science of military defense — is the foundation upon which the whole structure is reared. In this exaltation of the State, the individual disappears, or rather is completely submerged.

To develop their totalitarian education, the Nazis have had to overcome such great obstacles as the family; the old school system, with its emphasis on learning, freedom of thought, intellectual curiosity; and the autonomous power of the Church, both Catholic and Protestant, with its concern for the upbringing of the German youth. And, sad to contemplate, the Nazis have, to a large degree, succeeded in destroying centuries of intellectual, social, and spiritual achievement of the German people.

* School for Barbarians by Erika Mann; Modern Age, New York, N. Y.

The Nazis have attacked the family life by so robbing people of time that they have none left for their private lives; moreover, they have sought to engender lack of confidence within the home. Everyone must belong to some organization or other—the *Partei,* a *Fachschaft,* a *Bund,* the *Jungvolk.* Sheer lack of time makes family life impossible. Within family life, parents fear children, for oft-times children betray parents who do not see eye to eye with the Nazis. Of the German family today, the author writes, "It has lost all tenderness, all the past mutual thoughtfulness; and parental care is dead."

Since the Nazis have determined to destroy the old school, they have utilized every subject in the curriculum to teach the glory of war, the hatred of enemies. Even arthmetic is used for propaganda. One text-book is called "National Political Practice in Arithmetic Lessons." Propaganda is injected into the examples used. For instance, "The Jews are aliens in Germany. In 1933 there were 66,060,000 inhabitants in the German Reich, of whom 499,682 were Jews. What is the percentage of aliens?" Thus, the student is informed that the Jews are aliens in the Reich. Arithmetic examples help to make children war-minded. For instance, "If the speed of an airplane is 175 kilometers per hour, how many hours would it take for a plane to reach Moscow, 1925 kilometers from Berlin; Copenhagen, 481 kilometers from Berlin; and Warsaw, 817 kilometers from Berlin?" Other texts add that it takes 7.5 minutes for a "passenger plane" to drop its bombs.

German children are encouraged to write letters to children in foreign countries, France, England, America, in which they praise Hitler, the Nazis, and condemn the Jews as the cause of the world's ills. The Jews are made the symbol of the forces of enmity surrounding Germany, the corroding element in the civilizations of the world.

The Nazis have for the most part done away with text-books, and have substituted pamphlets as the means of instruction. These pamphlets can be distributed or suppressed as the political needs of the moment require. The Nazis outside of Germany seek to build a humane facade over all their hideous work within their country. For this purpose, there are beautifully printed, but innocuous text-books, to which they point with seeming pride.

The pet of the whole educational system in the eyes of Hitler is the Hitler Youth Movement, his direct creation. Its purpose is twofold: teaching the physical background of war, for which they prepare by marching, shooting, riding, flying; and psychic readiness for it, in the apotheosis of the Fuehrer, glorification of the holy ground of Germany, and worship of the one, the only, Nordic race. In the Hitler Youth, the girls are trained for just one end—motherhood. The function of women is to produce soldiers for the German State. The unmarried mother is at last glorified. "The number of illegitimate pregnancies and births," writes the author, "among the members of the 'State Youth' is tremendous."

Hitherto the Nazis provided the Youth with the family, the school, and the Jews as objects of hate. More recently, the Church, which had the rashness of putting up a fight, has provided an excellent target, and the Nazis were not slow to use it. Jesus is referred to as "that swine" or that "Jewish tramp"; Catholic priests are pilloried as being immoral; Protestant ministers are thrust into concentration camps.

Thus, the Nazis, on the ruins of the ancient institutions of society—the family, the school, the church—have built their modern Temple of Horrors dedicated to War, Conquest and Hate.

Erika Mann holds out hope that Germany will regain her normality in time. Already, passive resistance is found. Children go through their Jew-baiting and hate-creating activities listlessly. The severe physical strain on youth begins to show in "flat-footedness" and other ail-

ments. Students in higher schools and the universities, though brought up as Nazis, do not attend classes. "They protest by leaving empty benches before Storm leaders disguised as professors and by crowding the halls for those few who have a little knowledge of the extra-Nazi world." She has faith that Germany's inner greatness will revive.

This book ought to reach multitudes of Jews and non-Jews. It contains a terrible warning to all civilized peoples—the power of evil let loose upon earth. Nazi Germany has become the incarnation of barbarism. Education has become a vicious instrument to pervert and distort the human mind and spirit. For us Jews at least there must be patience and faith in the triumph of human decency, a faith strengthened and deepened by such German and Christian spirits as Erika Mann.

How The Other Third Lives

By Ira Eisenstein

THE novel* under review deals with the life of the sharecroppers in the South of the United States. In it, the reader meets rape, flogging, death, poverty, chicanery, lynching, oppression, frustration, and finally, a kind of fatalistic resignation. In other words, it is not a cheerful book. But neither is the present world outlook cheerful; not is life in the South gay for the thousands of tenant farmers who are victims of landowners who add "house to house nad field to field." A novelist, with a social conscience, cannot be expected any more to write sweet and lovely tales for us which soothe and amuse us.

The title is particularly interesting for a reader whose cultural and religious traditions reach back to the Bible. It points the moral of the sordid and depressing story. That moral is: that so long as the fundamental social laws contained or implied in the Mosaic legislation are flouted, human misery will continue to infest the world and plague mortals. Throughout the book, Tamp Moten, a sharecropper, yearns to leave the serfdom which he endures under Aaron Longnecker; he dies without seeing the promised land, which for him lies across the river (which one can traverse, incidentally, only on the payment of a toll. . . . "God don't own a single goddam' share in this here bridge . . .") in the neighboring county, where free land is available. After his death, his son, Kirby, spurred on by his father's failure, batters at the gates of the promised land, only to land in jail, and ultimately to yield, surrending his struggle against apparently invincible odds, to renew the cycle of serfdom.

The eminent scholar and Georgist, Louis Wallis, in his "God and the Social Process," interprets the whole career of Israel during the period of the first commonwealth, in terms of the struggle between the landowners and the dispossessed erstwhile landowners. The struggle of *mishpat,* according to Wallis, was the century long attempt to maintain a society of free land holders whose members would not ever become—or for long remain—alienated from their ancestral holdings. Thus, the entire Prophetic movement was a protest against the tendency toward land monopoly, and hence the monopoly of power. With this thesis in mind, the reader easily understands why adherents to Henry George's general philosophy, calling for the socialization of land rent, endorse the novel as powerful corroboration of their thesis. The sincere believer in the basic impulses behind biblical laws will certainly see beyond the

**Land Without Moses,* by Charles Curtis Munz, Harpers, N. Y., 1938.

appalling depravity of the life described, to the far reaching implications for social reconstruction.

In discussing a book of this sort, the critic would be carping indeed if he dwelt upon the simplicity of its characters, their unqualified goodness or wickedness. The people who inhabit the novel are to a greater extent symbols than they are persons. The landowner is an out and out villain, as is the riding boss. The sharecroppers are hopelessly subjugated, and when a spark of revolt is struck, it is a conventional spark, not particularly related to the personality of the one who harbors it, but rather introduced by the author for the purposes of his narrative. Nevertheless, the book loses none of its importance thereby. Far be it from this reviewer to minimize the seriousness of literary values; but the time is past when we can afford to dismiss a work and dispose of its social significance because of defects in creative literary treatment.

For, in this specific instance, other issues are skillfully drawn as well. Although the bulk of the novel treats of the unconscionable slavery of the sharecropper, we are nevertheless taken behind the surface of the landowner's life too, and are given intimations of the unseen powers which impel him to cruelty and cupidity. The banks, which hold the mortgage on his lands, drive him relentlessly. The national program of curtailment in production, as a means of alleviating depression, is revealed for the irrational and unjust program that it is. The social relations between the negroes and the whites are portrayed with restrained irony; the author apparently loves the negro as himself, and cannot bear to observe the unjustified contempt in which the shackled white sharecropper holds the free, landholding negro. The reader who lives in the great metropolis, in the North, forgets—or never learns—how the other third lives. After reading a book like "Land Without Moses," he learns and will not easily forget.